

your cigarettes and one or two extra plus, by ducking down and shoving your hand in, a ward cigarette. You are rich! What do you do with your cigarettes? Even one cigarette is subject to cadging for hits from every side. Your shirt pocket is the only place, and everybody reads shirt pockets expertly. You can smoke one and jam two behind your ears and brazen it out, but you don't want to. You don't stay rich long. Most of the time there are no ward cigarettes and that puts about a dozen on full-time bumming. So when you get a carton of Kools you trade a couple packs for shirts, etc. and you give two packs to the ward and get involved in the 2-1 game with two or three people and your carton is gone in two days.

A lit cigarette is well-being. You have succeeded, temporarily. You have friends and family: you are healthy, wealthy, and smoking. You have a burning cigarette in your hand. When you draw it makes your hand and face warm. You are making love to yourself.

These three inches. Yours. But here come the hits. Every kind of mouth. They draw hungrily. Their profuse thanks, if received, is more annoyance.

The happiest time of the day for me was after the evening meal when I had one cigarette that was for me. There was only one place to smoke it: the bathroom, stall next to the window. I got a light from an orderly and walked in and watched the sun go down in the west through the heavy screen on the window and pretended I had just put in a hard day on a farm and truly earned my keep and it had been a good day. I pulled my cigarette into myself, strong and slow, rewarding myself for my hard day.

(UNTITLED)

Dad your dying
made me remember
your bedtime story

(told once, standing,
Judy in the bottom
bunk, me in the top,
908 5th Street,
Brookings, S. Dak.)
about Rocky your horse
you rode to school
who wouldn't obey
and once during lunch hour
he was running so fast
you tried to make him stop
and pulled on the reins
harder and harder
but he wouldn't stop
until you finally pulled so hard
you pulled the reins
bridle bit and his head
all the way around
til he was looking right at you
still running fast as ever
and there was a barbed wire fence
coming toward you
so you let go the reins
so he could see it,
and he did, and took two jumps,
and stopped dead at the fence
while you flew over.

-- Jim Klein

Rutherford NJ

A BILLBOARD IN LAS PALMAS

like the planet of the apes
the last scene you'd expect
is liberty
her helmet laid back
her nose peeling
selling winston cigarettes
her face an alien green
looking as if she had inhaled
the truth for the first time